



Security Council

Distr.: General
26 July 2016
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 22 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The situation in south-eastern Ukraine is cause for growing concern. The Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist irregular formations have sharply stepped up their shelling of settlements under the control of the Donbas militia. The following are a just a few of the incidents that occurred last week.

According to information provided by the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), over the period from 12 to 20 July settlements under the control of the militia came under fire 15 times from positions where Ukrainian armed forces are deployed. In Donetsk on 13 July observers reported the injury of a woman, the destruction of two houses and industrial structures (report of 14 July 2016). On 15 July, a house in the Petrovsky neighbourhood of the city was blown up by a shell fired from a 122 mm mortar (report of 16 July). On 16 and 17 July, two women civilians were injured during the shelling of Donetsk and by the detonation of a landmine (report of 18 July).

In Hirlivka, school No. 84 and surrounding homes were hit by a high-calibre artillery shell (report of 15 July). On 12 July, a local resident was killed during shelling in Staromykhailivka (report of 16 July). On 15 July, a shell was fired at the checkpoint in the Stanytsia Luhanska district, while observers from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission were present, injuring a local resident and a member of the militia (report of 16 July). In Kominternove a house and farm buildings were damaged (report of 19 July). In Sakhanka two houses and gas and power lines were struck by a mortar and destroyed (report of 13 July). In Zaichenko two houses were damaged by mortar shelling (report of 13 July). On 19 July, in Yasynuvata, shelling damaged the power lines, disrupting the operation of the water filtration plant and leaving 40,000 people without water.

In addition, observers have repeatedly logged cases of intense fire from the positions occupied by the Ukrainian armed forces. On 15 July, security forces fired at least 200 mortar and other artillery rounds from Avdiivka and, on 14 July, some 50 mortar rounds from Svitlodarsk.

An analysis of the reports of the Special Monitoring Mission shows that some 70 per cent of the total number of incidents of fire are artillery bombardments of human settlements in the Donbas area from positions where Ukrainian security forces are deployed.



Observers have recorded significant movements of Ukrainian weaponry in the so-called "security zone", in breach of the Minsk package of 12 February 2015. Over the period from 12 to 20 July, four multiple-launch rocket systems were discovered in Kalynove, four such systems and a howitzer in Makedonivka, two howitzers in Tarasivka, six anti-tank guns in Zhelanne, one howitzer in Khersones, a 152-mm cannon in Volnovakha, and a tank in Shchastia. Observers found ammunition stockpiles maintained by the Ukrainian armed forces for the multiple-launch rocket systems: 200 rockets in Ivanivka and 323 rockets in Kalynove. Over this period, the observers noted the disappearance from Ukrainian stockpiles of 219 pieces of military equipment (24 of them had still been in place last week).

Flights by Ukrainian military aircraft were recorded: an Mi-8 helicopter overflew Bylitske and an Mi-24 helicopter gunship overflew Krasnohorivka. The Ukrainian armed forces are carrying out artillery exercises in Karlovka. In addition, the Ukrainian military notified the observers of its intention to rotate its units. The Special Monitoring Mission stresses that such military movements are not provided for by the Minsk agreements.

The sequence of events is easy to follow. Since the end of 2015, Kyiv has been ratcheting up the tension, putting paid to the truce agreed on for the start of the school year. A process has begun of gradually occupying the no-man's land and seizing the settlements located in it, such as Shyrokyne, Pavlopil, Pyshchevyk and others. In the spring, in several places, the Ukrainians started to push forward their positions. This led to heightened tension in the Yasynuvata-Avdiivka district, near Olenivka, where the entry-and-exit point was shelled in April and a number of civilians killed.

During the briefing on 11 July in Vienna, Alexander Hug, the Deputy Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, noted that tension in Donbas had been exacerbated by, among other factors, the movement of materiel by the Ukrainian military along the "front line" corridor in the area of Svitlodarsk and Hranitne, and also by assertions by Kyiv that it intended to move its checkpoints in Zaytseve and Berezove closer to the point of contact and to deploy the Azov and Donbas volunteer battalions to the conflict area. He also stressed that the situation along the entire contact line had sharply deteriorated in late June and early July 2016 as a consequence of intense and indiscriminate bombardment by 122-mm howitzers, 152-mm artillery shells and multiple-launch rocket systems from Ukrainian military positions in Svitlodarsk in the direction of Debaltseve.

This military activity by the Ukrainian armed forces is taking place against a backdrop of stubborn refusal by Kyiv to implement the political aspects of the Minsk agreements and to comply with the commitments that it has entered into. Instead, Ukraine's representatives in the negotiation process are merely trying to create the illusion that they are interested in a peaceful settlement to the crisis within Ukraine. While constantly highlighting the theme of sustainable security, Kyiv is actually fomenting the continued deterioration of the situation along the line of contact.

We stress once again that there is no military solution to the crisis within Ukraine. It can only be resolved by peaceful political and diplomatic means on the basis of strict and full implementation of the package of measures, through direct dialogue between Kyiv and Donbas. This is the guiding principle running through the Minsk agreements of 12 February 2015, which are reaffirmed by Security

Council resolution 2202 (2015). Attempts retroactively to distort those arrangements, by imposing a one-sided interpretation of the priority order of the steps and setting artificial preconditions, are holding up the peace process.

It is our firm conviction that efforts to stabilize the military situation should take place in step with implementation of the package of measures. Sustained and concerted efforts must be made to ensure the de-escalation of tension through, among other measures, the demilitarization of sites along the line of contact, and to seek solutions to political problems.

Recent events, however, show that Kyiv has no appetite for this. Scrupulous implementation of the package of measures manifestly does not feature among the Ukrainian leadership's priorities. At the same time, there are clear signs that the Ukrainian military is preparing a combat operation. The letter from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine of 19 July 2016 only serves to confirm this. We categorically reject the threatening insinuations in that letter. It was precisely such reckless behaviour that brought matters to their current state.

The Ukrainian military provocations in the south-east must not be allowed to evolve into full-scale combat operations along the entire front line. The resurgence of the war could extinguish any peace process. In this regard, we call upon all international partners to bring their influence to bear on Kyiv, with a view to preventing this disastrous course of events.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) V. Churkin